THROUGH LIFE'S SHADOWS.

BY ELIZA F. POLLARD,

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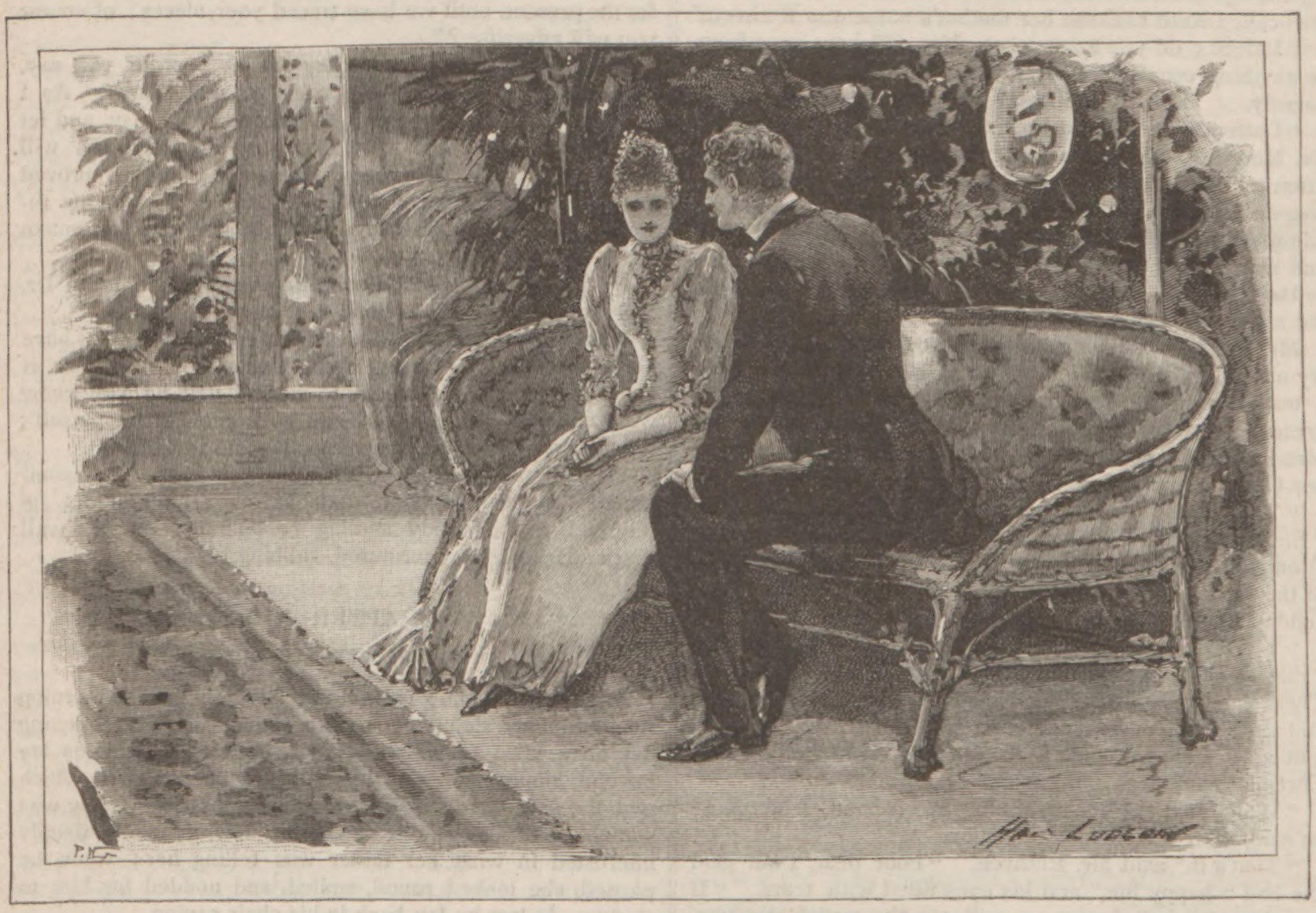


"He was a long time understanding the story." *p.* 84.

CHAPTER XII.

"ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL."

"I SHOULD ask for nothing better, doctor, than to give my daughter to be your son's wife," said Mr. Ruthven. "I have grown sincerely attached to him, not only because he has been the instrument, with God's help, of saving my boy's life, but because I consider him to be high principled and estimable in every way. He is also thoroughly imbued with the spirit and love of his profession, and is destined, I am sure, to take a high place among his colleagues. I sincerely wish he and Daisy would make a match of it. I am a rich man, and would do all in my power to give him a good start in life. What good is my wealth to me, except so far as it can further my children's happiness? Still I must be plain with you. I am not very hopeful that our wishes will be accomplished. Daisy and Clement are good friends, appreciate each other thoroughly, but I have never seen any indication of a warmer sentiment in either of them, though I have watched them closely," and Mr. Ruthven spoke the last words in an evidently disappointed tone of voice.

"Has your daughter ever heard of Clement's engagement to Ruth Oliphant?" asked the doctor.

"When he first came to us I gave her to understand there was something of the sort, just to put her on her guard; she is such a little flirt, and fascinates the men so."

Dr. Morgan smiled. "And she has not managed to fascinate Clement?" he said.

"No, I am afraid the old love has proved too strong; and yet I thought you told me the engagement was broken off?"

"I have done my best that it should be," answered the doctor, "but I am afraid I have only partially succeeded. Ruth refused to break off her engagement, but virtually she has done so, for she has disappeared. I tried to trace her, fearing her influence over Clement; but failed to do so, and since his return, notwithstanding all his efforts, my son has been equally unsuccessful."

"Then you think he cares for her still?" asked Mr. Ruthven.

"Supposing he does," answered the doctor, "it can serve no purpose—they cannot marry. If only Ruth were concerned in the matter, it would be bad enough; but there are two other sisters, one a confirmed invalid, and all penniless. What could Clement do under such circumstances? To settle the matter, I even offered to pay them a small amount quarterly, provided Ruth would throw up her engagement. The eldest sister, Theresa, never imagining she would hesitate, accepted the arrangement, but when Ruth was informed of it she quietly brought me the money back, and told me that, act as she might, she was not to be bought out. Vexed as I was, I could but admire the girl's spirit. Since then, I have neither seen nor heard anything of them."

"Mrs. Oliphant is dead, I suppose?" asked Mr. Ruthven.

"Oh, yes, the mother died when Ruth was quite a child. By-the-by, a curious coincidence; her father told me she was called Ruth because her mother's name was Ruthven."

"Indeed; do you know where Mrs. Oliphant came from, or anything concerning her family?" asked Mr. Ruthven, eagerly.

"I attended her throughout her last illness," answered Dr. Morgan. "She was a very charming woman, and she often told me that she had been a very fortunate one. She was an orphan with no relations; a governess in a family, when she met Mr. Oliphant, and he fell in love with her and married her. A real love match, and they were happy to the very last. I don't think Mr. Oliphant was ever quite the same man after her death."

Mr. Ruthven had listened in silence. "I think I must try and find those poor girls," he said at last. "Possibly I may have a greater interest in them than we are at present aware of. But first, how can I find out where this Mrs. Oliphant was born, who her parents were, and what her Christian name was?"

"The easiest thing in the world," answered Dr. Morgan. "She died in the house in Park Street, and was buried in Brompton Cemetery. You will find all you want to know in the parish register. But what is your reason for this sudden interest in people you have never seen?"

"I think it just possible," said Mr. Ruthven, quietly, "that Mrs. Oliphant may be my own long-lost sister. There were only two of us. I left her alone in Liverpool, and since have never succeeded in tracing her. Strange, indeed, if I should come upon her thus accidentally. Her Christian name was uncommon."

"Wait," said the doctor, holding up his hand. "Mercia!" he said, after a moment's reflection.

"That's it," said Mr. Ruthven. "Poor dear, I am glad she had a happy life," and his eyes filled with tears. "If you do not mind, doctor, we will see the parish registers, and so I shall be satisfied. My next care will be to find her children. It will be curious indeed if, instead of my daughter, your son should, after all, marry my niece."

"Stranger than fiction," said Dr. Morgan. "But I think it will be as well to keep the matter quiet for the present, until you have proofs of what you now only surmise, and until we find the sisters. Of course, it would alter matters considerably—a match with your niece would be a very different thing from marrying a bankrupt's daughter. Still, I do not care to raise Clement's hopes, for fear we should prove mistaken."

That same afternoon Mr. Ruthven made all necessary inquiries, and found that the late Mr. Oliphant's wife was "Mercia Ruthven, daughter of John Ruthven, of Liverpool."

"There is nothing left for me now to do but to find her daughters," he said to Dr. Morgan after dinner. "I shall consult Daisy to-morrow; her woman's wit may help us."

"She telegraphed for Clement two or three days ago," said Dr. Morgan. "It seems Master Cyril got caught in a thunder-storm, and received a regular wetting, and she was frightened."

"Yes, I heard about it," said Mr. Ruthven. "I have been detained in London longer than I expected about this new mine which has been discovered on my estate. If it should turn out all right, I shall make a present of it to my nieces. Neither Daisy nor Cyril want more than they have got. Cyril took no harm from his accident, I understand, and they are both charmed with L—— and the neighbourhood."

"Yes, so Clement wrote in his letter this morning. I am expecting him home by the last train. I really think, Mr. Ruthven, it would be as well to keep him in the dark for the present, until we have traced your nieces; of course you will advertise?"

"I suppose so, though if they are as poor as you say, they are hardly likely to take in even a daily paper. As I told you I will talk the whole thing over with Daisy, and let you know how I decide to act. I hardly think she will care to keep Dr. Clement in suspense; he has proved himself true and faithful, and has therefore earned his reward. However, a few days more or less will not make much difference."

"Will you return and dine with us to-night?" asked Dr. Morgan, as Mr. Ruthven rose to take his departure.

"No, thank you, I am tired. The events of to-day have been in very truth 'stranger than fiction,' and I feel as if solitude were very necessary to me. I will let you know what my intentions are as soon as I know them myself; for the present, adieu, and remember me to Clement."

"I will not fail," answered the doctor, as he accompanied him to the door, and, having seen him out, he returned to his study smiling contentedly. "All's well that ends well," he murmured, rubbing his hands.

CHAPTER XIII.

"THE FOURTEENTH GUEST."

FATHER and daughter were closeted together in the morning room, a sunny, dainty room with French-windows, opening out on a lawn bright with flower-beds; green fields lay beyond, sloping down to the valley, in the midst of which rose the grey turrets of the old Norman castle. Daisy was standing half in, half out of the window, evidently deeply interested in what her father was telling her; when he paused, she looked round, smiled, and nodded for him to go on. At last he lay back in his chair saying,

"So you see, Daisy, we have now nothing to do but to wait quietly until we find them. I shall employ the police; I see no other way."

"The police, as if they were thieves!"

"Well, what would you do?" asked her father.

She crossed the room, came up to him, and kneeling down beside him said softly, looking into his face, "Thank God, who has guided our steps to this out-of-the-way village. Father, Aunt Mercia's daughters are, I verily believe, quite near to us."

"What do you mean, Daisy?"

And she told him. "Do you know my cousins' Christian names?" she asked.

"Yes," he answered; "Maria, Theresa and Ruth."

"Just so," said Daisy, "I heard her call her sister Theresa. Oh, father, I am so glad!" and tears of happiness filled Daisy's bright blue eyes. "She has been so brave, my cousin Ruth, working so hard, and do you know, I believe she guessed we were the Ruthvens, with whom Dr. Clement went abroad; and, of course, like everyone else, she thinks he must be going to marry me. I understand now why she would not see me, and was so stern the other day; and I asked her to kiss me! Hard lines to kiss the girl whom you suspect is robbing you of your lover; but she did it nevertheless. Father, let us order the pony carriage and go at once to the Hermitage."

"Willingly," answered Mr. Ruthven.

Daisy danced out of the room. Never had she sat so upright, and handled her reins so dexterously, as on this

bright June morning, driving her two grey ponies through the park, and the village of L———, up the steep hill-side leading to the Hermitage. Her cheeks were flushed with excitement; and, to tell the truth, Mr. Ruthven was scarcely less moved.

They were his sister's children. He was going to find them in poverty and sadness, and as far as lay in his power he intended giving them back what they had lost. Poor Mercia! He remembered her, a pretty, fair-haired child, with blue eyes like Daisy's.

"But my dear sir, the Misses Cox would never forgive me. They have been over a year in my house, and have never gone beyond the garden gates, and have seen no living mortal, not even the Rector," and poor Miss Lister looked scared.

"Well, then, let me see Miss Ruth. I must make my way into their presence, my dear lady," said Mr. Ruthven; "I have very important news to impart to them."

"Here she is, father, tell her yourself," and Daisy, with her arm linked in Ruth's, entered Miss Lister's sitting-room.

"My dear child, I am so thankful to have found you," and Mr. Ruthven took both Ruth's hands in his, and drawing her towards him, kissed her forehead.

The girl's pale face flushed. "I do not understand," she murmured; "what does it all mean?"

"Only," said her uncle, tenderly, "that this morning you were alone and friendless in the world, and now God has sent me to take care of and look after you; Ruth, I am your mother's brother. Did you not know that her maiden name was Ruthven?"

"Yes, I heard it once, long ago, but have never thought of it since; I had quite forgotten it," she answered. "How did you find it out?"

"By chance conversing with Dr. Morgan yesterday on quite a different subject," said Mr. Ruthven; "and this little daughter of mine has been making friends with you meanwhile."

"Then Dr. Morgan knew my mother's name was Ruthven," said Ruth.

"Yes, but he failed to put two and two together till yesterday; my questions opened his eyes."

"And," began Ruth, but she stopped short.

"Knows nothing at all about it—we are going to give him a surprise. I declared I would find you for him," laughed Daisy. "One month I was to have, one month more!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Ruth, as the remembrance of that evening and the words she had heard in the park came back to her with their real significance.

"Well, you see I have succeeded," said Daisy. "Will you kiss me now, my jealous cousin?" she added in a low voice.

The words were hardly uttered before Ruth's arms were round her neck, and the two cousins, half laughing, half crying in their excitement, embraced each other tenderly.

"And now for my two other nieces," said Mr. Ruthven. "Ruth, you must gain me admittance, my dear!"

"Joy never kills," she answered, and crossing the little hall she entered her sisters' sitting-room. A few minutes later she returned. "Will you come, uncle?" she said, and taking Daisy's arm she was about to follow, when she caught sight of Miss Lister's wistful face. "Oh, my dear, dear good friend, did I forget you for one moment? Forgive me," she said, throwing her arms round her neck. "You of all others, without whom I should have lost courage."

"Do not thank me, dear, rather thank God who heard my prayers for you," said Ann Lister, stroking the fair young face, upon which the dawn of happiness was already glowing.

It is unnecessary to say that Maria and Theresa took very kindly to their new relatives, and that during the next few days the health of the former improved greatly. She had evidently had enough of solitude, and the prospect of once more partaking in the pleasures of life, of which she had been deprived, made her throw off the languor which she had so long indulged in. Cyril was delighted with his Cousin Ruth, and when initiated into the secret, enjoyed to the full the surprise which was awaiting his dear doctor. Only Ruth was faint-hearted. "After all," she thought, "if Daisy has charmed him!" Once she even ventured so far as to say to her cousin, "Are you sure, quite sure?" She got no further.

Daisy flashed round upon her. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Ruth, to doubt either him or me."

"I don't, I don't really!" answered Ruth, humbly.

"Of course you don't," said Daisy, proudly.

It was about a week after these events that Clement, who was still in London, received the following letter:—

MY DEAR DOCTOR,—My father has insisted upon giving a dinner party to our new neighbours, but unfortunately we cannot make up our number, unless we put Cyril out, which father would never allow. As we now stand we shall sit down thirteen to dinner. This would never do. Personally, I have no objection, but some superstitious friend would be sure at the last moment to decline, which would be awkward. Can't you come to my help, and, instead of having this so-called unlucky number, make my fourteenth guest? If I assured you I had good news for you would that tempt you? "Virtue," we are told in the copy books, "is its own reward." Come and try. Cyril joins with me in expressing an earnest wish that you will put in an appearance to-morrow night.—Yours very sincerely, DAISY RUTHVEN.

The drawing-room at "The Folly" was looking wonderfully pretty that June evening. Daisy and Ruth had devastated the garden and conservatories, and it was a perfect bower. The guests had all arrived, and that *mauvais quart d'heure* which precedes the announcement of dinner was trying their patience.

Miss Redcliffe, an elderly maiden sister of the lord of the manor, suddenly remarked, in an audible whisper to Mr. Ruthven, "It is very unfortunate, but do you know we are just thirteen?"

Her host smiled. "I see my daughter was right," he said. "You need have no fear, Miss Redcliffe, we are awaiting our fourteenth guest."

"Oh," answered the lady, bridling up; "I am sure I do not mind, but others might."

At that very moment the door was thrown open, and the footman announced "Dr. Clement Morgan."

"Just in time, my dear doctor," said Mr. Ruthven, crossing the room, and shaking Clement heartily by the hand.

"How do you do, doctor?" said Daisy, coming forward, looking pretty and mischievous, and with a little flutter in her manner. "So my charm worked," she added, *sotto voce*.

"Are you not a witch?" he answered; "you charm us all."

"Dinner is served, sir," the butler announced, with due gravity, and the couples fell in.

"Doctor, will you take in my niece, Miss Ruth Oliphant?" said Mr. Ruthven, steadying his voice with an evident effort.

Clement started and turned pale; looking down he saw Ruth's upturned face close beside him.

"It's all right, Clement," she said softly, laying her hand on his arm.

"I suppose I am not dreaming?" he said, as he moved almost mechanically in the wake of the other guests. "If so, I pray never to awake," he added in a low voice, pressing the small gloved hand resting so confidingly on his arm, and bending down to catch a glimpse of Ruth's happy face, in which repressed tears did battle with smiles.

"I am not quite sure myself," she answered, in a half whisper.

"You will allow a man need to have strong nerves to stand such a shock, Miss Ruthven," said Clement, as later in the evening he and Daisy and Ruth were standing together in the conservatory. Daisy laughed.

"I told her so," said Ruth; "but she said she had warned you that a surprise awaited you, and you would know what she meant."

"Mischievous," said Clement; "but I must needs forgive you, friends for ever and a day," and he held out his hands to her.

"Cousins," she answered. "I told you I would find her," she added triumphantly, and with a bright smile she left them together.

"I am so happy I hardly care to ask you how it has all come to pass," said Clement. "Nevertheless, if you will tell me," and he drew her to a seat at the further end of the conservatory. He was a long time understanding, and she a long time telling the story, but they neither of them perceived the fact.

"And you doubted—you really lost faith, Ruth?" he asked, reproachfully.

"No, not really," she answered, looking up shyly, her eyes pleading forgiveness.

"You will never do so again?" he whispered.

"No, never," she answered, a happy smile breaking over her young face, and driving away the shadows.

"My poor darling, it was hard," he said, softly, and their lips sealed the compact for ever and for ever.

Never had the village bells rung out so merry a peal as on Clement's and Ruth's wedding morning. It was glorious July weather, and the school children were verily laden with roses to strew before the bride as she, leaning on Mr. Ruthven's arm, passed beneath the old Norman porch and entered the church, where she knew life's greatest joy awaited her. She had tasted of sorrow's cup, and could now thank God for having given her her heart's desire. She was tempered, like true steel which has passed through the fire, and understood that joy and sorrow are alike the gifts of that Father whose love never faileth.

The Australian mines proved a success, nearly doubling Mr. Ruthven's already large fortune.

"Don't give any of it to me," said Daisy, "or I shall never get married. You may as well advertise me as a gold mine at once—the men will all run shy of me."

"I am not too sure of that," answered her father; "but you need not fear. I have made the Australian mines over to your cousins."

"Bravo!" said Daisy, clapping her hands.

Before many weeks were over, the two sisters took up their residence in London, with a comfortable house, backed by a comfortable income, and to everyone's surprise Maria's health improved rapidly. She had learnt to appreciate the good things of this world during her year's seclusion.

Dr. Clement and his wife accompanied the Ruthvens abroad for a couple of years until Cyril's health should be fairly established.

"When you return you shall set up in practice for yourself," said Mr. Ruthven, "and you shall have no reason to regret having fulfilled your engagement." He kept his word, and young Dr. Morgan and his wife began life under the happiest auspices; but what Ruth prized more than all the good things which had come to her, after her husband's love, was Daisy Ruthven's friendship.

THE END.

THE GIRL WHO IS EVER WELCOME.

THE welcome guest is the girl who, knowing the hour for breakfast, appears at the table at the proper time, does not keep others waiting, and does not get in the way of being down half an hour before the hostess appears. The welcome guest is the girl who, if there are not many servants in the house, has sufficient energy to take care of her own room while she is visiting, and if there are people whose duty it is, she makes that duty as light as possible for them by putting away her own belongings, and so necessitating no extra work. She is the one who knows how to be pleasant to every member of the family, and who yet has tact enough to retire from a room when some special family affair is under discussion. She is the one who does not find children disagreeable, or the various pets of the household things to be dreaded. She is the one who, when her hostess is busy, can entertain herself with a book, a bit of sewing, or the writing of a letter. She is the one who, when her friends come to see her, does not disarrange the household in which she is staying that she may entertain them. She is the one who, having broken the bread and eaten the salt of her friend, has set before her lips a seal of silence, so that, when she goes from the house, she repeats nothing but the agreeable things she has seen. This is the welcome guest—the one to whom we say good-bye with regret, and to whom we call out welcome with the lips and from the heart.

TENNYSON'S PICTURES OF THE SEA.

NO one acquainted with the locality of the favourite home of the poet laureate at Freshwater Bay in the Isle of Wight, can wonder at the evident enthusiasm which prompted in his poems so many graphic and beautiful pictures of the sea. Nearly forty years have flown since Tennyson penned those affectionate verses to his dear friend, the Rev. F. D. Maurice, inviting him to that same flower-decked cottage, where

". . . groves of pine on either hand
To break the blast of winter stand,
And further on the hoary channel
Tumbles a billow on chalk and sand."

Yet the poet's intimate friends declare that his first love for that hoary channel, as seen from "the ridge of the noble down," is as fresh and warm to-day as in his early manhood, and he is never tired of gazing on that scene of ever-changing beauty, confessing, as he often does, that he is indebted to it for many of his happiest inspirations.

None but a close observer and lover of the sea could have drawn that life-like picture in a couplet, which appears in *A Dream of Fair Women*, of the blustering winds and tides, and their effect upon the shore :

"Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand
Torn from the fringe of spray."

That is a striking and impressive line in *The Voyage*,

"The houseless ocean's heaving field;"

and not less so is the line in *Enoch Arden*, where in conjunction with "November dawns and dewy-glooming downs," the poet goes on to speak of

". . . the low moan of leaden-coloured seas."

Never were rhythm and cadence more in perfect accord with the subject than in the very familiar and widely-favourite couplet,

"Break, break, break,
On thy cold grey stones, O sea!"

There are in *The Sea Fairies* some very dainty pictures in miniature—what one might almost call vignettes—of the ocean in its varying moods. For example the line,

"Betwixt the green brink and the running foam,"

when the sailors looking down saw the fairies, is eloquently expressive, as is the line a little farther on,

"High over the full-toned sea;"

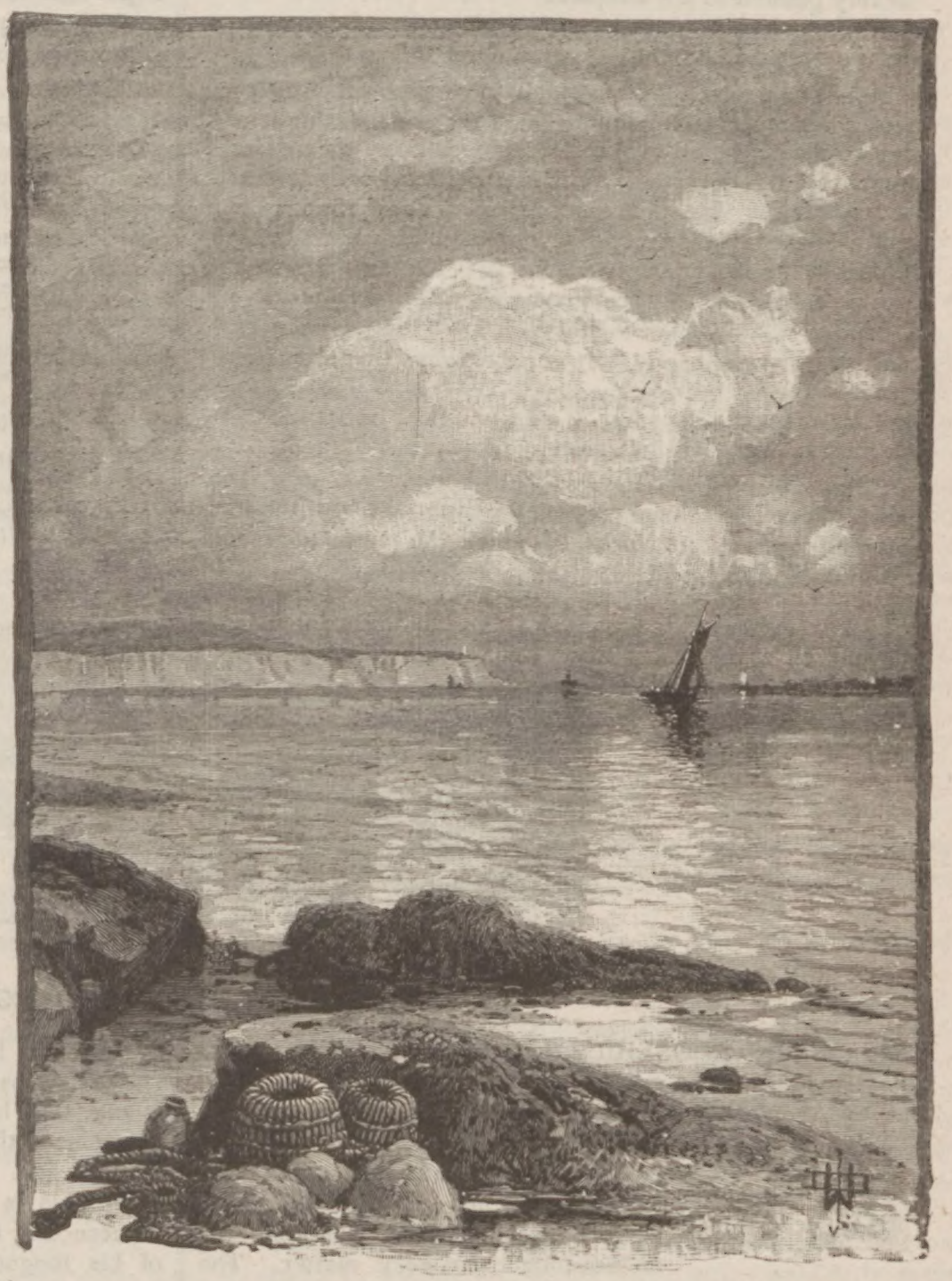
and nothing can surpass the enchanting melody of such lines as these :

". . . the spangle dances in bight and bay,
And the rainbow forms and flies on the land
Over the islands free;
And the rainbow lives in the curve of the sand;
* * * * *
And the rainbow hangs on the poising wave,
And sweet is the colour of cove and cave."

These words sound like the merry ripple of laughing waters.

In contrast to this let us quote the picture from the pathetic story of *Sea Dreams*, of the ocean lashed into the fury of a storm :

". . . . . a full tide
Rose with ground swell, which, on the foremost rocks
Touching, up-jetted in spurts of wild sea-smoke,
And scaled in sheets of wasteful foam, and fell
In vast sea-cataracts—ever and anon
Dead claps of thunder from within the cliffs
Heard through the living roar."



"The spangle dances in bight and bay."

We cannot pass over one of those dainty songs in *The Princess*, in which

". . . . the women sang
Between the rougher voices of the men
Like linnets in the pauses of the wind."

We refer to that soothing and tender strain which commences

"Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea;
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon and blow,
Blow him again to me."

What is under the sea, low-lying in its mysterious treasure caves and cells, has always been a theme of poetic fancy and curious wonder. In his twin poems, *The Merman* and *The Mermaid*, Tennyson gives us a peep at some of the marvels under the sea. We have visions of

"pale green sea-groves straight and high,"

of "starry spangles and shells," of "turkis, and agate, and almondine," and we revel in that picture of peace and beauty painted in the couplet:

"Under the hollow-hung ocean green
Soft are the moss-beds under the sea!"

We almost envy the mermaid her happy life, albeit she sits a very long time combing her hair, and dressing it with the white sea-flower,

"Low adown, low adown,"

and despite the unpleasant visits of an occasional intruder in the shape of

". . . . . that great sea-snake under the sea
From his coiled sleep in the central deeps,"

her life is not unhappy. It is not always that she sits

"Combing her hair
Under the sea
In a golden curl
With a comb of pearl;"

for there are occasional very merry flirtations with the mermen in and out of rocks, of which the mermaid herself, who ought to know, shall be in this instance a deponent, permitted like Silas Wegg to "drop into poetry." And this is what the said deponent sayeth:

"We will run to and fro, and hide and seek,
On the broad sea-wolds and the crimson shells,
Whose silvery spikes are nighest the sea;
But if any came near, I would call and shriek
And adown the steep like a wave I would leap
From the diamond-ledges that jut from the dells;
For I would not be kiss'd by all who would list
Of the bold merry mermen under the sea.
They would sue me and woo me and flatter me
In the purple twilight under the sea.
But the king of them all would carry me,
Woo me and win me and marry me
In the branching jaspers under the sea.
Then all the dry pied things that be
In the hueless mosses under the sea
Would curl round my silver feet silently
All looking up for the love of me."

True to his life-long love of the sea, Lord Tennyson in one of his latest and perhaps the most touching and pathetic of all his poems, utters a prayer which all who know his name will cordially echo—though with the fervent hope that its realisation may be long delayed. Nothing could be happier or more beautiful than the aged laureate's anticipated farewell to the shore of Time, and his launching on the waves of Eternity's unbounded sea:—

"Sunset and evening star
And one clear call for me,
And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark.

For tho' from out our bourn of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar!"

WANTED!—PLAIN SPEECH.

POSSIBLY there is no one under whose eyes this article will fall who has not at some time or other been amused at the indistinct, imperfect talk of some little prattler, whose baby brain and baby tongue have not yet had sufficient practice to make conversation in his mother-tongue an easy matter. The earliest efforts of a little child to master the initial difficulties of pronunciation always have had, and probably always will have an interest for most people; and the statement that "Baby said 'ma-ma' quite plainly to-day," is one that has, perhaps, given rise to more wonder and amazement than any other statement ever made since the world began.

All this is very well. The pride of those most nearly concerned in the fact that the baby has discovered the use of his tongue is a very proper and pardonable pride, and no one objects to it. What many do object to is the strange practice too often adopted of educating the baby after this

first linguistic performance to speak by a strange medley of sounds that is neither English, French, German, nor any other accredited language.

The baby is given to understand, for instance, that he is "mumsey's pitty pet;" that his latest toy is "a pitty sing for babsy to play wiz;" that his pap is "nicey-nicey;" that he is a "lickle peshus chezzer;" that he is a "*boo*ful babsy-wabsy;" and many other things that only his mother will ever tell him. And the "lickle peshus" sits on "mumsey's" knee, staring into her face with eyes and mouth wide open, and, in the innocence of his baby heart, believes it all!—yes, that's the pity of it.

In a little while, when the first lessons of this strange language have been sufficiently pondered in his small mind, he will essay to make his first speech; and, if he is not scared clear out of his wits by the maternal shriek of delight at his unparalleled precocity, he will soon become possessed with the idea that he does a very clever thing when he informs his father one fine day, in response to fond enquiries as to whose treasure he is, that he is "mumsey's ickle peshus chezzer."

By and by the little "pitty pet" will be informed that he is "getting a big boy now," and his imitations of this unrecognized and mischievous manner of speech will be repressed by paternal authority. His father will object—and very properly—to the boy being further encouraged in this nonsensical perversion of the Queen's English, and then the poor little fellow will have to unlearn all that he has learnt of it, a tax upon his mental powers which need never have arisen if nothing but plain English had ever been spoken in his hearing.

The pernicious custom of talking to a baby in "baby talk," as it is called, is too deep-seated to admit of speedy abolition; but the utter foolishness of it is at once apparent when the baby words are put down in cold, unfeeling, unloving print, and it is to be hoped that some, at any rate, of the mothers who read these lines will make an effort from henceforth to talk to their babies in a rational, common-sense way. Of course, the temptation is great to adopt a childish manner of speech when addressing a child; but surely a moment's reflection will convince anyone that it is an injustice to the child to encourage it in its wrong and imperfect pronunciations. Let the little one talk in its pretty, quaint way if you like, and take all the amusement and interest you can get from its queer muddlings of our intricate and difficult language; but don't, pray don't, either by letting him be a witness of your amusement, or in any other way encourage him to adopt these imperfections as a settled form of speech. Only speak always in his presence in a rational and sensible manner, and insist that everyone about him shall do the same; and from constantly hearing every word of his little vocabulary properly pronounced, he will gradually come to pronounce them properly, too; and as he grows older his little errors of speech will die a natural death. The satisfaction of hearing the little fellow speak plainly and correctly will far outweigh any passing pleasure or amusement that can possibly be derived from his funny, babyish errors.

"But," I fancy I hear some indignant mother exclaim, "am I then never to address my baby by any endearing words or pet phrases?" Softly, my dear madam. I have never said you should not do so. Call it your "dear," or your "darling," or your "cherub," or your "precious little treasure," or anything else that your love suggests; address it by any one of the multitude of pet names that rise spontaneously to every mother's lips, when she looks upon her little one; but oh, please do say the words as they ought to be said. Don't for a moment entertain the fallacy that mutilated English is the proper first food, so to speak, for your baby's brain, or that the child will more easily understand broken or perverted or maimed words than whole and sound ones. Many a man goes through life with a lisp or other impediment of speech that sadly interferes with his social advancement, and that might have been corrected in his infancy, but for the circumstance that his fond, foolish, selfish mother—yes, selfish mother—was proud of the lisp of the baby, and encouraged it, and now the man suffers for his mother's foolishness. What was attractive in the baby makes the man appear ridiculous, and hampers and restricts him in his battle with the world.

Think on these things, then, you mothers with baby prattlers about your knees. Teach your babies plain speech, and be assured that when they have grown to man's and woman's estate they will bless and thank you for it. For in laying the foundation of a good address you will be giving your children one of the highest advantages it is in your power to bestow.

D.

BECAUSE HE WAS A BOY.

JACK was a regular scapegrace. Not altogether his fault, perhaps. There is something to be said for those whom the discipline of life misses, for character wants as many pancakes and impositions as any schoolboy in the forms.

Now, Jack had reaped his share of such benefits during that preliminary stage of existence; but ever since he left school for college, fortune had had nothing but caresses for him, for he was possessed of that convenient institution, a moneyed *pater*, at his back. The other fellows courted him, the girls spoilt him. What wonder if he *did* turn out a scapegrace at that rate!

But amongst Jack's feminine acquaintance was one girl whose conscience was quite clear on that score, who from childhood up—for she and Jack had known each other fifteen years—had never pandered to his petty vanities at the expense of truth. Yet, strange to say, this was the one around whom his admiration and devotion twined themselves.

He flirted with the others by the score; but Flossie he would have given his right hand to win.

Jack had never forgotten the day when first she stood out from among the rest. He had over-reached a boy not half so well off as himself, and was making it his boast before half-a-dozen of his votaries, when Flossie suddenly took up her parable. "*I* think it downright mean and cowardly of you," she exclaimed, "and I won't say differently because you are a boy!" And she had preserved that attitude towards him ever since.

No matter that he was handsome and well off, and capable of making love to her. She didn't want to be made love to at the cost of self-esteem.

"Jack sat down and penned his answer, then and there." *p.* 90.

Those words, too, "*Because you are a boy.*"

So much is palliated by mothers, sisters, and admiring fair ones, on no more cogent grounds. No wonder sons and admirers—husbands of the future—turn out scapegraces sometimes. If only girls and women would keep in mind that theirs is the privilege of bearing the standard of truth and purity! If only they, with one consent, would do as Flossie did, what a revolution they would bring about.

The end of it was that Jack, with an attempt at self-justification, restored what he had defrauded, which would have had a salutary effect upon his morals, but for the fact that the sacrifice was offered at the shrine of approbation, rather than of equity. Flossie had set up her throne, however, and she maintained it right on into the twenties, year by year.

Jack had never exactly made love to her as yet, because the friendship seemed enough so far; but it was perfectly clear to him what he meant to do eventually, and at length he made up his mind that the time had come to settle at the very next opportunity.

Just at that juncture, fortunately for Jack, for Flossie wouldn't have had him as he was, there came a crash that ruined thousands at one stroke, Jack's father among the rest. For "the pater" was, after all, only "block" to Jack's "chip," and just about as improvident and foolish as his son.

The blow knocked all the breath out of Jack. No more supplies, no more jolly times, and—no more Flossie, for, of course, she wouldn't marry a poor man. Jack moped about a day or two, looking unutterably bored; then suddenly made up his mind to go and have the first of it with Flossie, so that, should she have detected his intentions, she should not have the chance of jilting him.

He found her alone, reading the newspaper, moreover, which gave him just the opening.

"Seen the news of the smash?" inquired he.

"Awful business," he continued, as she nodded "yes." "Of course you know how heavily my father is involved?"

June by the River.

Flossie was in ignorance of this.

"It's an awful nuisance," continued Jack, "I don't know what a fellow is to do."

"Do?"

Flossie looked up amazed.

"I know what I should do," continued she; "regret that I had wasted so long living on my father, and set to at once. Surely all your college course has fitted you for *something?* Can't you answer an advertisement, or ——"

Jack, a trifle stung, picked up the newspaper, and ran his eye down it. He had no definite intention in doing so; but by a strange chance he dropped upon one that seemed meant for him.

"The very thing," cried he. "If I don't answer that directly I get in!"

"No time like the present," suggested Flossie, motioning towards the davenport. "Suppose you *post* it as you go home."

So it came to pass that Jack sat down and penned his answer then and there—the death-warrant of his idle life, as it turned out—whilst Flossie watched him, her hands clasped on her lap.

"I'll post it at once," he said, standing up, when it was written.

Flossie stood up, too; but Jack had something to say before he went.

"It's all over between us now, I suppose," began he, dolefully.

"All *over* between us?"

"You *must* know what I mean," continued Jack. "There were a dozen girls would have had me for the asking; but I never wanted any one of them but you. But I'm a poor man now."

"And you suppose I should despise you for that?"

Jack's heart gave a bound. "Then ——" began he, eagerly. But Flossie stopped him.

"Prove your worth, before you claim my respect," said she; and there and then did Jack make his resolve. Whereupon Flossie related something that astonished him.

A rich uncle, upon whose favour her father had foolishly counted, had unexpectedly re-made his will, with the result that Flossie had resolved to seek her independence as a governess.

"So I am not recommending what I would not do myself," said she.

She and Jack are married now. They are not rich folks yet; but they are paying their way, and putting by against a rainy day; and they are happy in each other's love.

FLORENCE E. BURCH.

A PASSING CLOUD.

BY L. E. TIDDEMAN.

LUKE the fisherman was a shy man, and when one is shy and forty-five years of age, one is not as a rule interesting; the girls, indeed, were inclined to make game of Luke, but he did not let that trouble him, because he was not sweet on any one of them. It is doubtful, indeed, whether he concerned himself about their existence until chance threw him in the company of the belle of the village, Matthew Oliver's Sue. His mild grey eyes rested upon her for a space, and he became conscious of a new sensation. It was not entirely owing to her beauty, though to be sure no man in his senses could be indifferent to that; it was more to be attributed to the easy frankness of her manner, accompanied, of course, by a touch of diffidence, since Luke was more than twice her age, and very wise even for his advanced years. He was a bit prosy, his mates said, but Matthew Oliver's Sue did not seem to think so. She would listen to his talk with a rapt expression, her arms resting on the moss-grown wall, her small rounded chin supported by her slight brown hands.

It was "Yes, Mr. Prendergast, I quite understand," or "Please, Mr. Prendergast, will you say it over again?" but never a yawn or a bored look, and always the same smile on the pretty lips. The young fellows rather pitied "Old Luke," as they called him; they feared it would go hard with him when the time of his awakening should come, as come it surely would; and they knew that in his early days he had had a great disappointment. For Luke was no bachelor, but a widower of three-and-twenty years' standing, and his short matrimonial career had not been a happy one. His wife had proved unfaithful, in spite of his great trust in her, and folks spoke of it as a Providence when she was laid to rest in the quiet churchyard. Well, if he were nursing the hope of winning Sue for a bride, he deserved to be disappointed again, for, as Joe the miller's son remarked, that would be a piece of effrontery which could but meet with its due reward. And everybody was ready to allow that Susan Oliver was a coquette—even her best friends. She had won the hearts of all the men in the village, and now she was amusing herself with her latest conquest; but it was out of all reason to imagine that she was doing anything more than amusing herself, though she did put on her gayest ribbon every time she expected to meet Luke, besides sticking a rose in her belt.

Alas! for the short-sightedness of the bold mortals who presume to try and fathom the intricacies of the feminine mind; alas! for the weakness of those who presume to say what may or may not spur the timidest of men to an avowal. Luke himself could never have said how he contrived to tell his tale of love, but he could always recall with a thrill of pleasure how blue was the sky, how glassy smooth the sea, how exquisitely lovely the silent shore on the day when Susan Oliver came to him over the yellow sand, with her apron held out to receive the shells he had gathered at her request, the sweet red colour suffusing her sunburnt cheeks.

It was just "Thank you very much, Mr. Prendergast," and again, "You are quite welcome, honey," then their hands joined and the shells dropped at their feet, without

either of them caring a pin's head what became of them. That was the first step; the next was pleasanter still, and there, with God's fair sky above them, and the great rolling sea beneath, they made their simple plans for the future.

Next day all the village knew that Luke Prendergast had won the hand of Susan Oliver, but that her heart went with it all refused to believe. They thought that Sue knew that her lover had laid by money, and that she had made up her mind to put up with him in consideration of this. Nevertheless, the day came, and that pretty quickly, when Matthew Oliver gave his girl away, and Luke Prendergast carried her off to his neat little cottage on the other side of the hill. Honeysuckle grew over it, pinks and carnations scented the little garden, and as folks said mockingly, it was a true lover's bower.

Susan Prendergast flitted about, uttering exclamations of delight, like a child with a new toy; later on her smooth brow puckered a little beneath the weight of her household responsibilities, for she was very young. Often when Luke sat smoking in the doorway she would come behind him and peep into his face to see if he really looked content. On such occasions he would forget he was forty-five, throw his arm around her, and draw her to him in a way that would certainly have raised a demon in the breast of Joe the miller's son.

That unfortunate young man, though it is doubtful whether he had just cause for complaint, went grumbling and grunting about the village, and it was owing to his foolish talk that certain idle rumours reached the ears of Luke Prendergast. At first he would not listen to them; by and by he could not do aught else; later still he wondered how he had ever been fool enough to fancy that a girl like Susan Oliver could marry him for love when there were so many likely fellows of a suitable age about.

The cup that had tasted so sweet grew bitter; he watched Susan jealously; yet when she glanced at him his eye never met hers, nor did he give her smile for smile. Once she ventured to ask him what was amiss. He answered almost roughly that all was well, but she did not believe him; how could she when his manner was so changed? She was of a sensitive nature, and so a thought came to her. He had repented of his choice; *he* was so wise, *she* so young and foolish; he had discovered that she was no fit companion for him. For one brief moment she longed passionately to be free again—for the days when she was Matthew Oliver's pretty Sue. Her father had loved her; why had she left him? It was all her own doing. Luke Prendergast would never have dared to ask her to marry him if she had not given him so much encouragement. What an infatuated girl she had been! Aye, and she was an infatuated wife. How could she help being so? Luke was so good, so considerate. She was sorry for him; she would try to please him better. From that day forth she would be more demure, more thoughtful, less openly glad and gay.

The task was easy because of the burden on her mind; her tone became graver, her step less light, her laugh no longer rang out clear and high above the notes of the canary in the window. The bird could have things all its own way now. Luke Prendergast observed the change in her, and his heart sank. It was true, then, she did not care for him; she had only married him for a comfortable home. Well, God helping him, she should have that, and perhaps by and by, if someone else had not already filled it, he should occupy a place in her heart.

So the days passed, and something came between these two who had loved one another so well—something which neither could define; something which restrained each loving gesture, and made their ordinary greetings seem strange and hollow. Susan was timid, Luke suspicious; the flowers had faded in the garden, leaving it bare and dreary; the confidence had faded from their hearts, and they looked at one another as strangers might. When Luke spoke it was more often than not of Joe the miller's son and his doings. He eyed Susan narrowly all the while, and feeling this she blushed rosy red. She would rather have discussed Luke Prendergast and his ways, had he but known it.

One afternoon, after an uncomfortable, one-sided conversation of this nature, her husband arose hurriedly and left her. She was vexed with him and herself, and she set to work tidying the room in an irritable, hurried way. As she did so, she came across his pipe and tobacco pouch. The latter needed filling: she performed the office as she had done so many times before; while she did so her heart softened. He was moody and disagreeable, but he was her Luke still; she would not change him for any other man alive. It was already growing dusk, but she found her way to the little table where her desk stood, unlocked it, and took out her three greatest treasures—a pair of cornelian earrings, a shell necklace, and a small dumpy purse. All presents from Luke, God bless him! She bowed her head and looked at them as they lay in the palm of her hand; then she pressed her lips to them in the abandonment of her girlish love. At that moment the face of Luke Prendergast was pressed to the window. His mild grey eyes were alight with jealousy. He saw through it all now. She cared for another—probably Joe; these were his gifts that she kept locked up so carefully. He had often tried to open his wife's desk, and found it tightly closed. What else did she hide away? Letters. He had thought as much. How white they gleamed as she fingered them! God forgive him! what a fool he had been; and now he was worse than a fool, for his passion was so fierce that he could have killed her as she stood toying with her treasures.

She turned to replace them and caught sight of his white, drawn face. Her first impulse was to call to him. She did not yield to it; that one brief glance had revealed to her his secret. He was not indifferent to her; he loved her, he was jealous. Her heart bounded with joy; her face remained calm and immovable. She trimmed the lamp, lit it, set the table, and waited. But Luke did not come in to tea, and all the evening his little wife sat with no thoughts in her heart save those awakened by the memory of his face.

At last—it was already past ten—he came in. How changed he looked! how utterly unlike the quiet, kindly Luke who had wooed and won the village beauty! She invited him to partake of the meal she had prepared. He would have none of it. He laid his hands upon her shoulders, and held her at arm's length.

"Wife," said he, "we must part. It is all over between us."

"Why?" she asked, pursing her red lips.

"You—know—why!"

"I think I do."

He was not prepared for her light answer; it suited him as little as did the poor attempts at finery that had once pleased him so well.

His features worked; his eyes flashed.

"I think," she said, softly, "it is because you are a cross old bear, and grudge me my little treasures. Would you like to look at them, Luke?"

He failed to understand her, but he followed her meekly, and watched as she unlocked the desk with her little shining key.

"There are these letters," she said; "you may have them if you like, and the earrings and the necklace and the purse. Somebody I loved dearly gave them to me before I was married."

Her voice trembled; the hands that held her treasures trembled also.

The eyes of Luke the fisherman were once more mild and pitiful, but they dropped before those of his wife; he looked shamefaced enough, in spite of his five-and-forty years.

"I thought——" he stammered.

"If I were a man," observed little Mrs. Prendergast, "I wouldn't think."

"What *would* you do, my dear?"

He spoke in a very meek manner, and was evidently prepared to receive instruction in the proper spirit.

She looked into his eyes, her own moist and beautiful.

"I would believe," she said.

He took the necklace, the eardrops, the purse, and the packet of letters in his rough hand and turned them over and over.

"The Lord forgive me!" he said, with something very like a sob.

"As *I* do," added Mrs. Prendergast, promptly.

She stood on tiptoe, took her husband's face between her hands, and kissed it more than once.

"I'm not making it up, Luke," she said, "because, you see, there has never been a quarrel."

"No, more there ain't," said he, "now I come to think of it, and there shan't ever be one either."

"Not even if I happen to speak to Joe?"

He made a wry face, and with a great gulp swallowed down his jealousy.

"You may speak to whom you like," he said, magnanimously.

Mrs. Prendergast took him at his word; the colour came back to her face, the old glad light shone in her eyes, and her laugh rose once more above the song of the bird in its cage.

"There's nobody like my Luke," she said, proudly, as she watched for his home-coming.

The miller's son passed by under her very nose, but she did not see him; she was straining her eyes to catch sight of a middle-aged figure; and when it came in view, she stretched out her arms, as though she longed to draw him in to the shelter of home. But he needed no persuasion, as the miller's son could not but observe.

LOOK AHEAD.

TAKE heart of grace and look before,
Instead of backward, on the way;
Wash out the old regretful score,
The sorrowing sins of yesterday.
For what's the world and all its days
But ours to try and try again?
Not ours to falter on its ways,
Not ours to fling aside for pain.
Take heart of grace, then, day by day;
Take heart of grace and sing each morn,
"To-day's to-day, not yesterday,
And all the world is newly born."

A HINT ON SHOPPING.—A clever woman, one of the best managers, always well dressed on not extensive means, with tastes not easy to gratify, has made this the rule for herself: never to go into a shop but once a week. Every day when the household affairs are being arranged, she looks to see what things are needed, marking especially those that seem imperative. At the end of the week, before going out, she consults her list, being always surprised to discover how many things can be struck out. She has found that many seemingly necessary are not necessary at all. Few ideas would be wiser to follow, and the course is hereby suggested to the busy house-wife.

MY LITTLE ADA.

My little darling Ada,
Her father's joy and pride,
To smother me with kisses
She toddles to my side.
Her prattle charms and cheers me,
However sad I be,
And the sparkle of her merry eye
Is sunlight unto me.

Her horse is in the window,
Her doll is on the chair,
Those little wooden bricks of hers
Are littered everywhere.
I love these mute reminders
Of Child-land and its joy,
Memorials of the Paradise,
I dwelt in when a boy.

And often, when she's sleeping,
With dimpled arms outspread,
On hushing tiptoe creeping,
I steal beside her bed;
And, kissing, pray Heaven guard her
Life's rugged journey through,
That so papa's dear Ada
May be God's Ada too.

S. W. PARTRIDGE.

THE NIECE.

BY SARAH TYTLER.

Author of "Papers for Thoughtful Girls," etc.

TO the baby niece as to the baby grandchild, "auntie," like "grannie," is mostly a great personage, a source of pleasures and delights, sometimes of more indulgences (because she has less responsibility) than "mother" herself. The enchantment lasts till the little girl is growing a big girl, for who has such leisure and cheeriness required for the proper telling of stories and dressing of dolls as auntie? The exception is when auntie is an unusually ungenial and incapable individual. Auntie is in the happy or unhappy position of having no girls or boys of her own to engross her attention and try her patience. She is not for ever having to say, in answer to tiresome questions and importunate requests, "Another time, my dear; go away and play now." If auntie has a trade or calling, as so many unmarried women of all classes have nowadays, she has still sufficient unexhausted energy to allow her little niece to push her small personality into the middle of rolls, copies, piles of lesson-books, bales of worsted, scraps of silk. If auntie is very good-natured, she will go so far as to let the little girl mimic her senior and play at working like her. She will suffer her visitor to instal herself in the class-room or work-room as a juvenile assistant, so as to fancy that she is fast growing up into an artist, teacher, art needlewoman, or fashionable milliner and dressmaker. Oh! the charm to the tiny performer, with her innate gifts of mimicry and imagination, of drawing with the stump of a pencil, and correcting exercises and keeping school, according to her "make believe;" of sewing, shaping, fitting on articles of dress on big auntie herself, who has to kneel down in order to be on a level with her diminutive dressmaker.

Soon the little girl measures auntie according to a different standard, with other eyes, from which the inno-

cent adoration and idealisation have fled. Soon the miniature woman's gift of mimicry is, if not checked by wise mentors, or by instinctive finer feeling on the part of the young maid herself, turned to other uses.

I would say a word on the imprudence, the unkindness, the lack of practical Christianity, shown by many parents in permitting themselves to ridicule before their children the children's grown-up relatives, even if the father and mother stop short of making butts of the objects of their derision. None is more likely to suffer in this manner than the unmarried aunt, who is apt to lay herself open to satirical comment by old-fashioned ways, lingering tricks of past youthfulness, primness and preciseness, or loudness and roughness, contracted from having had to "rough it" in a world not too easy for a single woman without a fortune to pass through. Sometimes the offence which provokes the contempt of these inconsiderate heads of families is, in fact, a badge of honour to the offender. She may be too upright and independent, too delicate-minded and reverent to lend herself to the practice of objectionable habits which have slyly crept in, or boldly thrust themselves into the routine of the daily life of the protesting "old maid's" married kindred. The provocation thus given by her has its root, if not in an exacting sense of incongruity and absurdity, in an impatient resentment at being censured by a relative whom the persons found fault with have been accustomed to consider quietly as stranded in the ordinary race of life, however deserving of recognition otherwise.

Let the motive be what it may, parents cannot do anything more fatal to the natural reverence of their young daughter, to the modesty, trust, and good faith, which ought to distinguish her, than to indulge themselves before her, or to suffer her to indulge in habitual joking at her senior, whether maiden aunt or bachelor uncle, or middle-aged teacher, to whom these ill-bred and unscrupulous elders have entrusted the education of their child. I am ready to make every allowance for the freedom of family life, for light hearts and light tongues, for the strong, well-nigh irresistible, temptation which exists for quick-witted people, young or old, to whet their wit on the follies and weaknesses of their neighbours with impunity. "With impunity"—there is the rub. There is a special meanness in assailing, under whatever cover of privacy, the undefended—it may be unconscious of any call for defence when wounded in the house of their friends. True, laughter breaks no bones, unless, perhaps, those of the laugher; but there ought to be a check somewhere, and when one hears a mocking nickname applied freely to a person whom the speaker is bound to respect, if not to obey, it is high time to apply the check.

I wish to say something to the niece rampant in her school-girl smartness and gaiety. She has long ago outgrown and waxed weary of poor auntie. The girl no longer thinks the woman brilliant or wise, but rather "a stupid, conceited old thing," an antediluvian out of the swim. The oracle of fifteen or eighteen yields reluctant deference, under compulsion, to her maiden aunt of five-and-thirty or forty. The oracle patronises the maiden aunt superciliously or takes her off—to her face sometimes—relentlessly. Was there not a time when you, my young friend, were fond of auntie? When you looked up to her and admired her enthusiastically? And was not that—callow time, if you will—when she could give you something, could, and did contribute largely to your happiness? Now, is it just, or generous, or gentle of you to turn upon her when that season is past? Apart from having no feeling for "old sake's sake," are we only to love and be kind to those who can confer favours upon us, and load us with benefits—as it seems to us? How then do you read the text, "It is more blessed to give than to receive"? Possibly you will tell me you don't wish to listen to texts or sermons. The worse for you if they are strictly appropriate texts, and thoroughly friendly sermons.

It may be that you will frankly seek to startle my antiquated notions (unfortunately for your purpose, I have known many girls, and I was a girl myself in my day) by coolly announcing to me that you have no wish to be gentle, you desire to be honest instead. And I shall reply that it is quite possible to be both honest and gentle, that nobody is seeking to render you dishonest. I will add that there is one quality, the possession of which I am convinced you crave at the bottom of your perverse, rebellious little heart, and that is lovableness. I do not believe that lovableness in girl or woman can exist where there is no true gentleness—not sentimental softness or silliness, remember, but the gentleness, which gave the original meaning to the term gentle-woman, the nobility of nature which accords to every living creature his or her due; which shrinks from inflicting pain, which is the more lavish of its gifts of affection, attention, forbearance, sympathy, the less the recipient of the gifts has to offer of material gain in return.

It is but fair to say that as there is a tide in the affairs of woman as of man, so the overbearing young girl, on second thoughts, when she is herself older and more mature, often arrives at a quicker, more correct sense of the solid merits of her under-valued, nay, despised maiden aunt. The niece returns in a measure to her first love. I wish I could think that this was not for her personal convenience. For by the time she has grown a woman, has married, possibly, and has children of her own, she naturally becomes alive once more to the advantage of numbering a worthy maiden aunt among her kindred. What does it not mean? Comfortable quarters for herself or her babies, in town or country, always available when it suits her. A kinswoman to be depended upon, come to years of discretion and experience, to whom the married or unmarried niece can apply with confidence in every emergency. The maiden aunt will come, keep house and manage the servants, when the husband and wife or the father and daughter wish to take a holiday together. The maiden aunt will help to nurse an infirm mother or a sick child. In order to command these valuable services not only must the donor be propitiated, the niece to preserve her self-respect and character for consistency must call to mind and repeat to others, how fond she has been from her earliest years of "dear Aunt Mary" or "Aunt Emma," though, somehow, they contrived for a time to drift a little apart.

But it is hardly with the full-grown woman, whom years have softened and subdued, or taught a shrewder comprehension of her own interest, that we have to do. It is with the girl-niece—hard with the unripeness of youth, arrogant and headstrong, with the sense that the world lies before her, presumably to her crude ambition, at her feet. It is on the cards that the unmarried aunt, whose spirits are not so high or her hopes so sanguine, who is a little worn with the battle of life, and driven to believe herself that she has been rather a failure, may be occasionally or permanently the occupant of the same house which is thus more or less the home of both aunt and niece. Only to the elder it is not a nest from which she is pluming her wings

to fly, but a sacred refuge in which, if things are as they should be, she finds peace and rest, household regard and tender friendship. Now, suppose the young niece is the chief disturber of the family harmony. Suppose, from simple restlessness, from impatience of any other claims save her own, with which these others clash, from indignant spurning of the faintest shadow of restraint on her movements, or even on her opinions, in the mere arrogance or insolence of prosperous, headstrong youth, she should employ herself in making game of what she considers her maiden aunt's peculiarities? Suppose she saucily airs for her benefit all the one-sided, half-jesting strictures on maiden aunts or "tabbies," which in a certain class of literature match the strictures on mothers-in-law? Suppose the niece foments discord and stirs up strife in her father's house, until, carried away by the irritation she has done her best to excite, she deliberately sets herself to oust her kinswoman—her kinswoman with the fading eyes and the slowing step—from that house's shelter, what would you think of the niece's conduct? Would you consider me wrong in saying that she is playing about as odious and heartless a part as a girl, not absolutely unprincipled and unfeeling, can play?

A maiden aunt, who even approaches in virtue to the best of her kind, should, if looked upon as she ought to be, stand in the room of a second mother to her niece, and be entitled to a share of a daughter's duty and devotion. It is so when the relationship, not unfrequently displayed at its best, we are happy to think, has been fairly dealt with.

ALWAYS CHEERFUL.

It is not the easiest thing for a father, going home weary from a hard day's perplexing business; or for a mother, worn with countless household cares, to have and to show the cheerfulness, forbearance, self-denial and care for others requisite to make their home the happiest place on earth for all the family. But it can be done, and it must be done, if their children are to be saved from the world's worst temptations, and are to have through life the delightful household memories which are their right, and which give them the most real and attractive anticipations of heaven, of which the true Christian home is the foretaste. The duty is easier for some temperaments than for others, but no duty pays more richly for all it costs. And by-and-by those parents whose children fall for want of helpful Christian home influences will blame only themselves for failing to meet their first duty, and to use wisely their richest privilege.

THE CROSS MOTHER.

At no time in her busy days is an intelligent mother so apt to fold her arms and close the eyes of maternal justice as when she is cross—simply and undoubtedly cross. This crossness is chiefly caused by fatigue, weariness of body and mind, and sometimes of soul. With tired nerves and weary body, she cannot endure the common demands made upon her, and ill-temper follows. She sows bitter feelings, and repels loving attentions, with her irritable, hasty words. Broadly speaking, no mother has any right to get so tired. She cannot afford it. It takes too much out of her life, and too much out of her children's lives. Such a condition can more frequently be prevented than is generally believed.

The careless or shallow woman says, "I have been overworked. It made me cross," and she considers that a sufficient reason and excuse for any amount of similar indulgence. The religious or sympathetic woman worries over it, prays over it, sheds bitter tears, and then the trouble repeats itself. The remedy lies close at hand. Let the mother find out what makes her cross, and then let her avoid the cause. If social pleasures weary her, let them be decidedly lessened; if much cooking, or too many household cares, lessen them. If economical efforts cause the severe strain, stop economising at such a cost. That is the worst of wastes. Let the first economy be of that precious commodity, a mother's strength. — *Christian at Work.*

"GOOD—LIKE YOU."

BY MRS. GEORGE ARCHIBALD.

When I reproved my little girl,
  Her clear, gray eyes were grieved and wet;
She owned her fault, for pardon begged,
  And spoke some words I can't forget:
"If you were little, just like me,
  Would ever you be naughty, too?
If I were only all grown-up,
  I could be always good—like you!"

She meant it! Her sweet innocence,
  Which sent so sharp and sure a dart,
Knows nothing of the wicked moods
  That sometimes sway her mother's heart.
Wrath, envy, folly, discontent,
  The selfish impulse—not withstood—
These things accuse me, yet my child
  Believes that I am always good.

On Sabbath days the man of God
  Reproves me often unaware;
Ashamed, I hear his earnest voice
  My own unworthy deeds declare.
And nobler lives rebuke my own;
  But none had ever shaft so true
As she whose loving faith declared,
  "I could be always good—like you!"

—*Babyhood.*

PRESENCE OF MIND.

Why is it that in emergencies one person does just the right thing, while another stands helpless and irresolute, or does just what she ought not? We say that one has presence of mind, and talk as if that, like beauty or genius, were vouchsafed to only a few. But its elements are self-control and knowledge, and surely these may be developed in most characters. Let children be taught what to do if their own or their playmates' clothes should take fire, or if they are in a burning building; how to act in case of a runaway horse; how to revive one who has fainted or is apparently drowned; how to bind a cut, to stop choking and to prevent bleeding. If the reason for these actions is carefully explained, and the subject brought up frequently, children may be trusted to be of use in emergencies. It is because they are doubtful what ought to be done that most people hesitate when in danger. Once convinced that there is something to do, they will swiftly collect their thoughts, and, almost unconsciously, perform the daring deed for which they are praised as the possessors of wonderful presence of mind.

DRESS AND DRESSMAKING.

THE bonnets worn this season give one the idea that they are used rather for ornament than for any protection or warmth to the head; in fact, many of them are more like a head-dress than a bonnet. Flat shapes prevail for the most part, but there is a strong attempt to introduce both hats and bonnets with a small high crown, said to be of the "early Victorian" style, and worn with a long veil reaching down to the knees. However, this shape has not taken, and most ladies appear in bonnets as flat as a plate. Fancy straws are

Fig. 20.

Fig. 21.

shown in many pretty designs, but made bonnets seem more in favour than straws. These consist of a fine wire foundation covered with lace or tulle. Jet ornaments are largely used, and white guipure lace finds much favour for millinery purposes. Many of the bonnets worn now are trimmed high at the back and low in front; others precisely the reverse; while a third variety is flat all over the head and trimmed only with one up-standing spike of velvet, ribbon, or flowers on one side.

Fig. 22.

Fig. 20 shows a bonnet the foundation of which is of jet mounted on fine wire, while the trimming is of flowers with high ribbon bows at the back.

Very narrow ribbons and velvet are worn in all colours, and make a pretty trimming, especially for children's wear. Black lace as well as white and ecru is used, and makes a very effective trimming when raised on fine wire to form a sort of diadem in front of the hat or bonnet.

The sailor hat, which has been used so much of late years for country or sea-side wear, again shows itself, but with a little higher crown than was worn last summer. Fig. 21 shows such a hat, trimmed with a band of ribbon round the crown, and bows on the left side, and a raised jet ornament. Middle-aged ladies are wearing strings to their hats, which make a very becoming finish.

Pelerine mantles are still worn, but are quite unlike those of last season in shape. The cape proper is a round pelerine cut in one piece reaching to the knees, and over this are several graduated collars, shorter capes or a hood. Very thin cloth, of course, must be used, and even then the mantle seems too heavy for this season of the year. Guipure lace is sometimes used.

The novelty of the season, undoubtedly, is the loose sacque or Watteau paletot. The latter is shown in our illustration, Fig. 22, and differs from the sacque shape only in the folds down the centre of the back. In either jacket the back is made in one piece, the only seams in the garment being down the sides and on the shoulders. We cannot say we much admire these jackets, but they certainly suit a tall, slim figure better than a short, stout one.

Our illustration shows a paletot made in summer cloth, with a high collar and full sleeve, finished with a deep fitting cuff; but they are also made with a turned-down collar and coat sleeve, and when plain material is used a trimming of braid or jet is introduced down the centre of the back pleat. This jacket takes two and a quarter yards of double width cloth.

Fig. 23.

Some of our readers will appreciate the design of a boy's cricketing suit, shown in Fig. 23. Proper clothing for this healthy sport is very necessary. White flannel made for the purpose is the best material to use. Although it requires washing often, yet it will be found more economical and healthy than ordinary cloth. The paper pattern can be supplied in three sizes, the largest being big enough for a gentleman. Knickers or trousers, as desired, will be sent with the shirt.

Fig. 24.

Fig. 24 shows a little girl's dress made in the loose blouse style. The dress is in one piece the entire length, and is smocked or gathered so as to form a yoke. This piece, of course, is lined; indeed, many of these dresses have a fitting lining to the waist, which, we think, adds to the comfort of the dress.

Flat patterns can be supplied, Figs. 22 and 23, 6½d. each. Address, "M. C. Pattern," 9, Paternoster Row, E.C.